for Harold

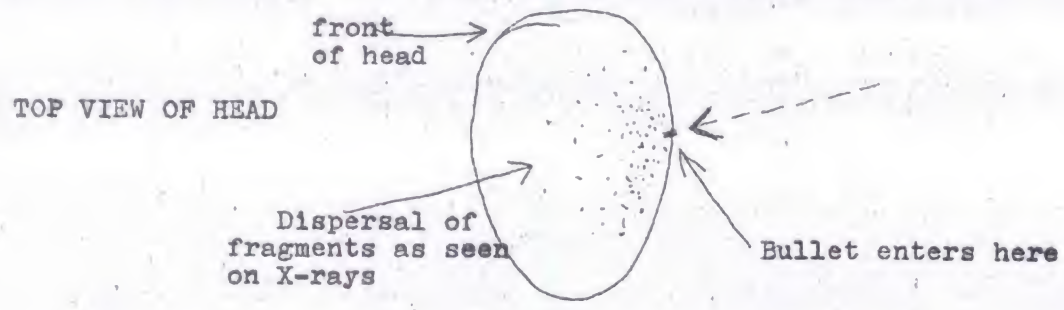
May 13, 1970

Dear Dick,

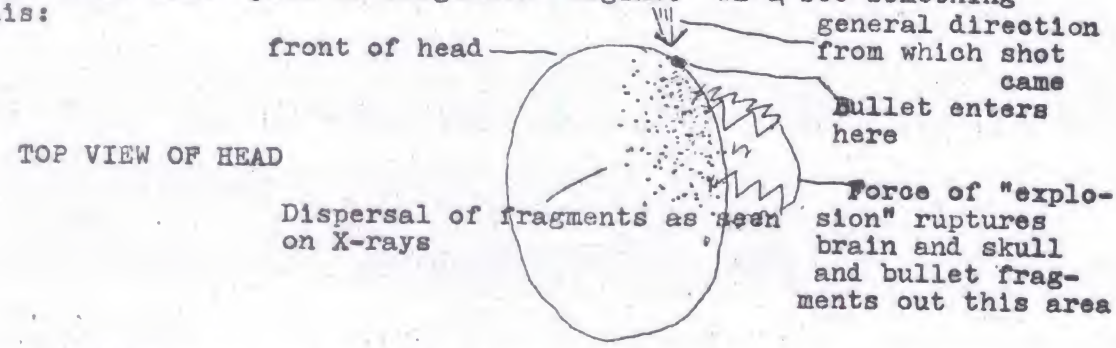
I'm writing this letter in reference to the JFK head wounds, in part a response to your letter of 5/6/70 and in part to introduce a new thought I had.

Use of handgun: I accept your caution on the unlikely use of such weapons. Now I ask you if there is a rifle which fires a "low" velocity (let's say under 1,800fps) unjacketed lead bullet. This is what I would assume hit JFK in head from the rear. As I said before, there is a very consistant set of characteristics about the entrance and exit wounds which indicates exactly this.

"Path" of fragments in head: I think I may be able to explain this as the result of a shot from the front. If you recall, you once sent me a letter in which you described the pattern of fragments you'd expect from a bullet which hit the head and "exploded." It was more or less a conical formation, with the apex toward the point of entrance and the larger fragments having deeper penetration than the minute ones. Now, we might see something like this had a shot been fired into the head from the grassy knoll to JFK's right:

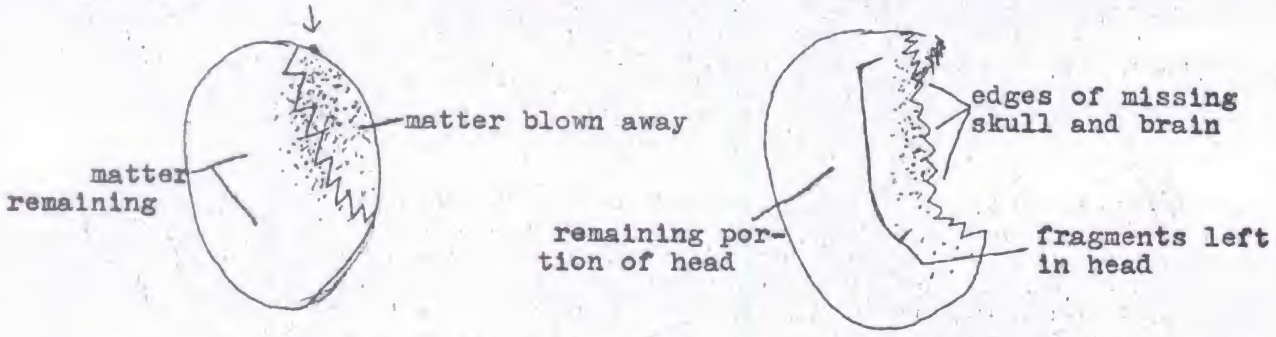


I think that a front shot from the right can be ruled out, however, because of JFK body movement (and head movement), plus just about all of the medical evidence ("tract"through brain, lack of metal on left side, etc.) Let's think in terms of a shot coming from the south knoll, which would be to JFK's direct front, possibly even left front. Suppose a shot hits the head from that knoll at around the point where that "path of fragments" begins. WE'd see something like this:

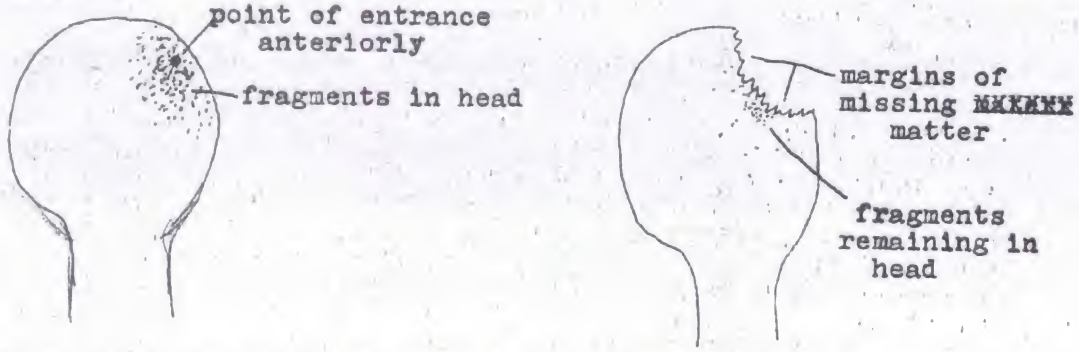


The second sketch does not show the head when the appropriate bone brain and bullet matter has been blown away, which would obviously have been the result. Also consider that for some time, JFK was oozing brain matter out of the wound, so we really don't know

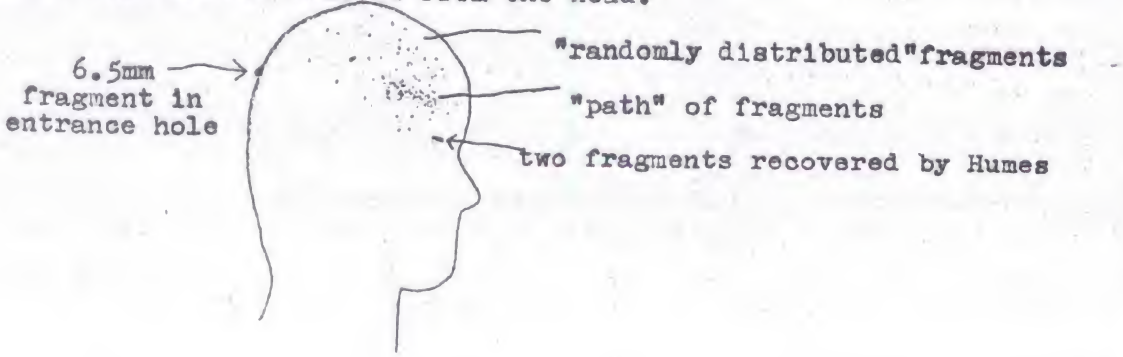
how many bullet fragments got pumped out of the head to be lost forever. Let's take the second sketch which shows the hypothetical dispersal of the fragments and indicate on it the area of brain and bone missing from JFK head and then draw the same picture with that area deleted, as it would have been when seen at autopsy and X-rayed.



As the above sketch should indicate, the dispersal of fragments left after all that was shot ~~MX~~ away has the form of a straight "path" along the edges of the missing matter. Now, try to relate this to a lateral X-ray, the projection on which the "path" was observed. In this consideration, remember that the above 2-dimentional sketches cannot show how the removal of so much head matter also affected the "top to bottom" dispersal of the fragments. Quickly, let me try to illustrate this also. The view below is supposed to represent a back view of the head. First shown is the hypothetical dispersal with all head intact; next to it is the appearence with the appropriate matter removed.



Now, we are ready to put this together in a lateral (A-P) view of the head, showing the fragments as they might have appeared on X-rays with all of that ~~matter~~ removed from the head.



I'm not trying to assert anything definate: Obviously, I can't. However, I think this is certainly a possible explaination for that "path" of fragments in light of the fact that we neither have seen the X-rays or have an adequate description of them.

Please comment on this. If you'd like, I'll send this idea to Wecht for comment, possibly as a follow-up to your letter--unless you do not want it known that I know of your letter to him. Soon I'll be getting off a letter to him about the lung bruises.

Really must go now.

Best,

cc Harold